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HOW WILL THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION WORK?

Fifty Questions and Answers About the San Francisco Charter

1. *What is the United Nations Charter?*

It is a constitution drawn up by delegates from fifty United Nations. It tells how nations can work together for peace and world progress. It is a treaty which the nations will consider for ratification. When the five Great Powers plus a majority of the other signatories have agreed to accept it, an international organization will be set up according to the terms of the Charter.

2. *What are the purposes of the United Nations Organization?*

To prevent war, to settle disputes by peaceful methods, to safeguard human rights and the basic freedoms, to improve economic and social conditions throughout the world.

3. *What states will be original members of the United Nations Organization, and under what circumstances can other states become members?*

All the fifty states represented at San Francisco which ratify the Charter will become original members. Poland, though not represented in San Francisco, may also become an original member. Neutrals and enemy states may be admitted, on the recommendation of the Security Council, by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. Governments created with the assistance of the Axis powers will not be admitted.

4. *On what principles is the Organization based?*

Upon the sovereign equality of all member nations, and acceptance of the obligations:

- (1) to settle their disputes by peaceful means;
- (2) not to use force or even the threat of force contrary to the provisions of the Charter;
- (3) to back up the United Nations in carrying out the provisions of the Charter and not to give any help to a nation against which the United Nations is taking action;
- (4) not to wage "economic warfare," but to work cooperatively towards the achievement of higher social and economic standards for all—the only way to achieve full employment in an economically unified world.

Nations not members are also required to abide by the principles of the Charter on matters of peace and security.

5. *Is the United Nations Charter an improvement over the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals?*

Yes. Important changes and many additions were made at San Francisco. Here are the main points of difference:

- (1) The powers of the Assembly are expanded to make it a forum for the discussion of all

questions of international concern and the body to which all United Nations councils and agencies will report. The Assembly has been given larger powers to bring about peaceful change.

- (2) It is made clear that the veto right of the Great Powers can not be used to prevent full discussion in the Security Council, and it has been agreed that if a Great Power is a party to the dispute, it shall not vote during the stage of efforts for pacific settlement of the dispute.
- (3) The powers of the Economic and Social Council have been broadened and stronger provisions made for extending its supervision over all kinds of international agencies working for human betterment.
- (4) A large and important chapter on the government of dependent territories by trusteeship principles is added and a Trusteeship Council created to supervise or administer such colonial territories as may be put under it by action of the peace settlements or such ex-enemy territories as may be placed under it voluntarily.
- (5) The Charter also gives the United Nations Organization such legal capacity, privileges and protection as it may require inside the territories of the member states.

6. How does the United Nations Organization differ from the League of Nations?

In many ways. It builds on the experience of the League and pays it the tribute of modelling its main organs after those of the League.

Some of the principal gains are:

- (1) The Charter puts armed force behind the keeping of the peace much more strongly than the Covenant was able to do. This time large armed forces will be ready to move, under the direction of the Security Council and the United Nations Military Staff, in accordance with agreements made in advance and in line with staff plans already prepared.
- (2) The Charter focuses the responsibility for enforcing the peace squarely upon the Great Powers. It was their disunity which made it impossible for the League to keep the peace, and our hopes for the future rest upon their pulling together.
- (3) The Charter leaves no possibility that conflicts between nations may be legally or properly settled by war.
- (4) The Charter provides for a much larger program of positive, constructive action to improve the lot of peoples everywhere. Peace cannot be kept by negative means alone.
- (5) The Charter makes long strides away from the unanimity rule under which all action in the League had to be by unanimous vote in the Council or Assembly. The widespread protest against the "veto" retained by the five Great Powers shows how far we have travelled in this respect.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7. *How is the General Assembly set up and what are its primary responsibilities?*

All member states will have one vote in the Assembly, though a state may send as many as five delegates. Annual meetings will be held and special sessions when requested by the Security Council or a majority of the members of the United Nations. The primary responsibilities of the Assembly are:

- (1) to discuss any question affecting peace and security and all matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers of any organ created under it;
- (2) to make recommendations for the settlement of any dispute or difficulty unless the Security Council is actively dealing with it;
- (3) to initiate studies and make recommendations on the many other subjects covered by the Charter, such as for the development of international law, and the promotion of international cooperation to improve health, education, etc.;
- (4) to set up, through the Economic and Social Council or directly, specialized agencies as needed, for example, to promote international trade, and to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies when brought into relation with the Organization;
- (5) to receive and consider reports from all the councils;
- (6) to consider and approve the budget;
- (7) to elect the Secretary General, on recommendation of the Security Council; the six non-permanent members of the Security Council; the eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council; some members of the Trusteeship Council; and, with the Security Council, the judges of the Permanent Court;
- (8) to admit new members, to suspend the rights of members, and to expel them.

8. *Will the General Assembly have power to pass laws which must be accepted by all member nations?*

No. The Assembly can only make proposals and prepare draft treaties for the consideration of the Governments.

9. *How free will the General Assembly be to serve as an international forum?*

Any member can bring up any question in the Assembly which is "within the scope of the Charter." It is doubtful that this phrase will limit the right of discussion, since most matters of human or international concern are referred to in the Charter. Any member may object that a subject is "domestic," and if the Assembly agrees, discussion of it would cease.

THE SECURITY COUNCIL

10. *How are the members of the Security Council selected?*

The Security Council will have five permanent members: The United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, China, and France. Six addi-

tional members will be elected by the Assembly for two-year terms. To insure rotation these non-permanent members may not succeed themselves. Three new members will be elected each year.

11. *What are the principal powers of the Security Council?*

The Security Council is directed to:

- (1) urge the use of any one of several specified means for pacific settlement of disputes;
- (2) investigate any dispute or situation endangering peace;
- (3) recommend methods of settlement at any stage in a dispute;
- (4) call for sanctions short of military force, such as severing communications, diplomatic relations, or trade with an offending state;
- (5) order military action by land, sea and air against an aggressive state, if necessary.

12. *How does the Security Council vote on issues of peace and security?*

Each of the eleven member nations has one vote. A majority of seven out of eleven decides questions of procedure, that is, what shall be considered and how.

A majority of seven out of eleven, including the five permanent members (the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China), decide on matters of substance, that is, on recommendations and on whatever action is to be taken. However, a party to a dispute shall not vote on proposals for pacific settlement of that dispute.

13. *Doesn't the veto right of the Great Powers doom the United Nations Organization to failure?*

It could be the cause of failure. But the Great Powers can be expected to be careful in the use of their veto. Presumably, none of the present world powers would risk an action which would unite the other nations against it. Nevertheless, in the event of such a calamity, the Organization would be invaluable in mobilizing world public opinion against the aggressor.

Instead of relying on coercion, we must build the habits of union and cooperation in the critical years ahead. No human society—city or nation—relies mainly on coercion to keep the peace. Public opinion, compromise, and constructive action are the bulwarks of peace at home, and must be also in the world society which science is forging with such terrific speed. A policeman must be in the background, but he cannot operate any society and make it function satisfactorily.

14. *Will an international police force be established under the Security Council?*

Not as some people define such a force, for the Council will have no forces recruited and paid by the United Nations. It will, however, have earmarked for its use at any time armed forces belonging to the member states and held ready for world police duty under the direction of the United Nations.

15. *What will be the functions of the Military Staff Committee under the Security Council?*

It will advise the Council about its military needs and exercise strategic command over any forces directed into action by the Council. It will also

make recommendations on the limitation of armaments.

16. *Can the Security Council use any armed forces of the United States without the consent of our Government?*

No. The vote of our representative on the Security Council will always be necessary to authorize the use of our armed forces. Our delegate can veto any use of force by the Security Council.

17. *Who will say what part of our armed forces shall be held ready for world police duty?*

This is a decision to be made by the Government of the United States. It should be the result of consultation between the Executive and Congress. The decision will be embodied in an agreement between our Government and the Security Council and will be ratified just as all our treaties are. Other members of the United Nations will, of course, make similar agreements with the United Nations. All members have agreed in the Charter to give rights of passage and other facilities to forces in the service of the Security Council. Certain national air forces are to be held immediately available for the use of the United Nations.

18. *Will the American delegate on the Security Council have the power to authorize the use of our armed forces by the United Nations Organization without the consent of Congress?*

This is wholly a matter to be decided inside our own Government. A method must be found that will insure the prompt use of specified armed forces whenever peace is threatened or an aggression has already begun, because quick action is essential. Our delegate would probably have the constitutional power to act by the direction of the President alone, but it is very unlikely that so grave a decision would be taken without consultation with the leaders of Congress.

19. *Does the Charter interfere with the Constitutional right of Congress to declare war?*

- (1) The Charter outlaws war but it recognizes the right of self-defense.
- (2) The use of specified armed forces is police action, not war.
- (3) In case of a major conflict which might lead to the use of all our armed forces, Congress would have to act. The Charter cannot take away from Congress the right to declare war.
- (4) The United States' delegate, acting for the President, in consultation with appropriate officers of the government, both executive and legislative, must be empowered to act quickly for the purpose of preventing aggression or restoring peace. The purpose is to avoid or suppress war, not to make war or declare it.

The American delegate has veto power to prevent the use of American forces in situations not considered by the United States as threats to the peace.

20. *Will the formation of the United Nations "freeze" all existing boundaries?*

No. It will not be possible to change boundaries by force, i.e., by war, without violating the Charter, but this does not preclude peaceful change. Highly

developed dependent peoples can press for full self-government with the support of the trusteeship principles in the Charter. Any existing states may unite, if they desire.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

21. *What are the major functions and powers of the Economic and Social Council?*

To promote better standards of living and economic and social progress in all parts of the world. This Council will secure reports on economic, social, cultural, educational and health problems, on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has power to make recommendations or propose treaties on any of these matters. All members pledge themselves to take action separately and also jointly to further these economic, social, and humanitarian ends.

22. *What is the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and specialized international agencies such as the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and the Food and Agriculture Organization?*

All of the various specialized agencies, and any new ones which may be needed, are to be related to the Economic and Social Council on terms to be determined by this Council and the agencies, subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

23. *Will there be international agencies or organizations to work on such problems as health, dangerous drugs, and the traffic in women and children?*

Certainly. It has been planned that there will be specialized agencies for these important tasks. The Charter sets forth the necessary powers to set up agencies in these fields. The League of Nations did some of its most valuable and universally approved work in these fields, and these problems are ones with which the nations must wrestle for the protection of their own peoples.

DEPENDENT AND COLONIAL PEOPLES

24. *Will the establishment of the Organization consolidate the control of the British, French, Dutch, and even American Governments over their dependent peoples?*

All Governments administering dependent peoples agree for the first time in history that the interests of these peoples are paramount and accept the obligation to promote their well-being. They agree to submit periodic reports on economic, social, and educational conditions in such territories.

25. *What is the basic purpose of The Trusteeship System and how does it function?*

In the interest of native populations and world peace, it provides a system of international supervision of certain territories detached from enemy states in this and the last war, and of any other territories voluntarily placed under the system. It operates through the Trusteeship Council acting under the General Assembly.

26. *How will the Trusteeship Council safeguard the interests of dependent peoples?*

On the basis of detailed reports from the governing or "trustee" power, periodic visits by officials of the Trusteeship Council to the dependent area,

and petitions from the people of the dependent area, the Trusteeship Council will supervise the administration to safeguard the rights of the people and advance them politically, economically, socially, and educationally. The Council may itself administer a trust territory.

27. *Does the Trusteeship Council have the right to make any colonial area independent?*

No. It can only hasten the development of dependent peoples by methods of persuasion and the focussing of public opinion.

28. *Will the trusteeship principles of the Charter have any influence upon the lot of dependent peoples not placed under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council?*

The Charter requires every member of the United Nations to recognize that the interests of the native peoples are paramount and to accept "as a sacred trust" the promotion of their well-being. While the effect of this pledge appears to be moral rather than legal, it gives world public opinion the opportunity to focus upon any abuses in the government of dependent peoples.

29. *What is the distinction between "trust territories" and "strategic areas?"*

Strategic areas are those parts of the possessions taken from enemy states at the end of the First World War, or at the end of this war, or voluntarily placed under trusteeship, which are to be used as military bases for the future defense of the peace. They may be placed by agreement under the supervision of the Security Council. A strategic area may be all of a trust territory, or a part of the territory.

Non-strategic areas may by special agreement be placed under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council, which reports to the General Assembly. Such trust territories might be: (1) territories previously held under mandate of the League of Nations; (2) territories taken from the enemy states of this war; or (3) any other territory which a state might desire to administer under international trusteeship.

30. *Will the United States be free to retain "strategic" Pacific Islands under its sole control?*

The Charter does not make any territorial settlements. It is generally assumed that we will retain effective control of any necessary Pacific military bases. At the same time other United Nations have rights and interests in some Pacific Islands which we may wish to recognize under a trusteeship agreement.

THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

31. *What will be the principal functions of the International Court of Justice?*

It will decide any legal dispute voluntarily submitted to it, and its decision in such a case may be supported, if necessary for peace and security, by the Security Council, which is empowered to take measures to give effect to the judgment.

The Court will also give advisory opinions on matters of law or treaty interpretation, when requested by the Security Council or the General Assembly, or by any other international agency

authorized by the Assembly to ask for an advisory opinion.

Every member of the United Nations automatically becomes a member of the International Court of Justice simply by ratifying the United Nations Charter.

THE SECRETARIAT

32. *What are the duties of the Secretary-General?*

He will be the executive head of the staff of permanent officials who administer the work of the United Nations. He will also serve as the Secretary of the Assembly, and of each of three Councils and will make an annual report to the Assembly. The Secretary-General has in addition one important power which the corresponding official under the League of Nations did not have. He himself can lay before the Security Council any question or situation which he believes dangerous to peace.

33. *How are the members of the Secretariat chosen?*

By the Secretary-General under regulations to be made by the Assembly, due regard being given first to competence and then to geographical distribution.

34. *What kind of work will the Secretariat do?*

These international civil servants will do all the day-to-day work of the Organization, conduct its correspondence, prepare its meetings, register all valid treaties between nations and perform any other duties assigned to them by the principal organs of the United Nations. They may not ask or accept instructions from any outside agency, and all governments agree not to interfere with their work.

AMENDMENT AND RATIFICATION

35. *What provisions are made for amending the Charter?*

Amendments must first be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Assembly and then ratified by two-thirds of the member states of the Organization, including all five Great Powers. A general conference to consider revision of the Charter may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly and an ordinary majority of the Security Council. If such a conference has not been held previously, the tenth annual session of the Assembly will decide whether to call such a meeting.

36. *How many governments must ratify the Charter to put it into force?*

It must be ratified by all of the five Great Powers and by a majority of the other states which signed the Charter at San Francisco.

UNITED STATES' MEMBERSHIP

37. *What steps lie ahead before the United States (like other states) will participate fully in the United Nations Organization?*

Following consent to ratification by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and ratification by the President, this Government must:

- (1) Appoint representatives to the Assembly and to the Security Council, defining their authority;

- (2) Negotiate an agreement with the Security Council on the contingent forces to be made available at the call of the Council;
- (3) Appoint any representatives to the Economic and Social Council, and to the Trusteeship Council, to which we may be entitled;
- (4) Negotiate one or more trusteeship agreements;
- (5) Pay its proportionate share of the administrative expenses of the organization;
- (6) Arrange to participate in specialized organizations related to the Economic and Social Council.

38. *What is membership in the United Nations likely to cost us?*

The annual budget of the League of Nations was at one time \$7,000,000, of which the United Kingdom, the largest contributor, paid nearly a million. The expenses of the United Nations will be considerably larger. Our annual share might be as large as the cost of a few minutes of war.

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS

39. *Will the Organization have any power to interfere with the internal affairs of member or non-member nations?*

No. It may not intervene in any matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. Many decisions formerly thought to be purely domestic are now recognized to have important international consequences, but the self-interest of all states can be depended on to oppose any interference in the private affairs of member states.

40. *Will the Organization have any control over the domestic school systems, textbooks, and teachers of United Nations members?*

No. It will set up standards for voluntary use and assist where desired. But should any nation attempt to teach its children doctrines dangerous to peace, such as the Nazis used, recommendations could be made by the Economic and Social Council, and the General Assembly and the Security Council could be asked to consider the problem. Teaching of this kind will be one of the danger signals warning us that this peace is being undermined, and that accepted obligations under the Charter are not being lived up to in good faith.

41. *Will the Charter guarantee racial equality to all peoples?*

No—it will promote, not guarantee, racial equality. In four different articles, the Charter calls for respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms, without distinction of race, sex, language, or religion. The Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council are directed to promote this objective, and they may be expected to do so through recommendations, persuasion and moral influence, but the United Nations Organization will have no power to compel its members to practice racial equality inside their boundaries.

42. *Will the Charter advance the free exchange of information?*

Yes. While there is no provision about freedom of the press, the reports of discussions in all of the

principal United Nations bodies will have world-wide circulation and many of its agencies will be continually collecting statistics, making studies and issuing reports. The General Assembly will consider all the work of the Organization and its discussions will help to center world opinion on all problems of concern under the Charter. This kind of work was one of the most valuable services of the League of Nations.

43. *Will the United Nations Organization guarantee "freedom of the air?"*

The Charter does not attempt to regulate the use of radio communication, but the Organization will be available should difficulties in this field arise.

44. *Why was no Bill of Rights included in the Charter? What actually will the Commission on Human Rights be able to do?*

Our own Constitution did not at first contain a Bill of Rights, when the task of defining personal rights and liberties was comparatively simple. When many different races, languages, religions, customs and economic systems are involved, the job is much more complicated, too complex for the Charter Conference to settle in a few weeks. However, the preamble of the Charter is a splendid start toward a world Bill of Rights.

The Commission on Human Rights will find ample authority in the Charter for long-time labors in behalf of individual rights. It can use many methods to advance its ends—conference, publicity, recommendations and proposed treaties.

REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE PEACE SETTLEMENTS

45. *What is the relationship between regional arrangements, such as the Inter-American System, and the United Nations?*

All regional arrangements having the same purposes as the Organization are welcomed. They are encouraged to settle local disputes, but may not undertake enforcement action without the authorization of the Security Council, unless against the present enemy states or in the case of a sudden aggression. The Security Council is to be kept fully informed about all activities of the regional organizations which affect the peace.

46. *Will the Organization have power to review and discuss whatever peace arrangements are worked out by the present belligerents?*

Not directly, though the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation which arises out of such settlements which seem to it to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations. The peace settlements will be made by the belligerents, and the United Nations will have no power to alter or pass upon them, although no peace treaty (or any treaty) will be valid and enforceable unless registered with and published by the United Nations Secretariat.

If as time elapses, some of the peace settlements should give rise to grave and continuing frictions endangering the peace, then the Security Council would be obliged to take the situation under con-

sideration, but there will be no right of appeal by the ex-enemy states from the decisions of the peace conferences.

BASIC NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

47. *Is the United Nations Organization democratic?*

It was created by real give-and-take discussion and negotiation between the Great Powers and the smaller nations. Everyone had his say and private organizations, especially from the United States, had a great deal of influence upon the molding of the Charter. It creates, moreover, many organs through which public opinion can make itself felt. The peoples can develop the Organization into an effective world stabilizer, if they persevere.

48. *Do the members of the United Nations yield any of their sovereignty?*

They do. And they do so by their own voluntary agreement out of enlightened self-interest. The most deadly of all sovereign rights, the right to make war, is abandoned. While the Charter stands, no member can enforce its will upon another by force of arms. Every member must also grant the forces and agents of the United Nations rights to act within its territory to accomplish the agreed purposes of the Organization.

49. *Is the United Nations a "world government?"*

No. It has no power to govern the nations. It is not a federal government. It is a confederation of nations with one central power—to prevent war between national states.

The Organization is authorized to attempt many kinds of constructive work, and its long-term success will depend on the results of its positive labors to improve and safeguard the conditions of life and work, but all of its creative endeavors must proceed by persuasion, agreement, and consent.

The United Nations may in time develop toward a world government, but only if the peoples and governments want to do so on the basis of experience.

FINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE

50. *Will the Charter actually guarantee permanent peace?*

It will not. Peace is not a static thing which can be "established." Peace requires constant, unremitting labor to compose differences between nations, to help their peoples gain an acceptable life and to fix habits of cooperation instead of conflict. The Charter is a good instrument through which these things can be done, but doing them will require the steadfast support of peoples all over the world for generations to come. The Charter is only a start—and a chance to save our own country and others from the still greater devastations of another world war. We have reached the crucial stage where we must make the United Nations Organization work to preserve peace or go underground into a new cave age.

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